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MEMORIAL

OF

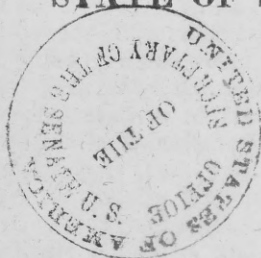
SUNDRY INHABITANTS

OF THE

UPPER COUNTIES

OF THE

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA.



NOVEMBER 28, 1820.

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MEMORIAL.

TO THE HONORABLE THE SPEAKER AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES:

We, the undersigned citizens of the upper country of the state of South Carolina, having witnessed, with astonishment and deep concern, the vote of your honorable body, at the last session, on the bill for increasing the duties on articles of foreign manufacture, feel that we are at once exercising a right, and performing a duty, in solemnly protesting and remonstrating against a measure, equally oppressive to the great body of the nation, and regardless of the dictates of a wise policy. If any apology were necessary for thus obtruding ourselves upon your attention, we should assuredly find it in the strenuous, extraordinary, and clamorous efforts which have been made, and still continue to be made, in other sections of the Union, to induce the government to pursue a course, which we feel urged, by the highest considerations, to deprecate. We cannot perceive, in the reasons which have been urged in favor of excluding foreign manufactures, any thing but a repetition of trite doctrines, which have been for more than half a century exploded by the almost unanimous concurrence of the enlightened writers on political economy, in every part of the civilized world. When, therefore, we advert to the unanimity with which the measure under consideration was supported by the representatives of those sections of the Union most deeply involved in the manufacturing business, we are forcibly reminded of the melancholy truth, that, though the reason and justice of *individuals* are continually triumphing over the dictates of passion and interest, this is rarely the case with nations, or large masses of men, sufficiently numerous and concentrated to create a public opinion within themselves. We have, however, the consolation to believe that the concurrence of so many enlightened and virtuous statesmen, in favor of a system so palpably unjust and impolitic, could have resulted only from the extreme suffering which all classes of the community have felt from the two great revolutions which have lately taken place; the one in the political state of the world, the other in the currency of the country. As this suffering, from the nature of its causes, must be *temporary*, we confidently anticipate a constant diminution of the numbers and zeal of the advocates of the manufacturing interest.

The leading argument urged in favor of the extension of the system of protecting duties, is, that it will increase the aggregate of national wealth; and our leading objection to it is, that it will produce a certain and uncompensated *diminution* of that wealth. As we are

here fairly at issue with the advocates of the protecting duties, we must be excused for presenting, somewhat at length, our reasons for the opinion we entertain. The first position we shall lay down, is, that a protecting duty will increase the *annual consumption*, or, in other words, the *annual unproductive expenditure* of the nation, very nearly to the full extent of the increased price of those articles of consumption which fall under its operation. We scarcely know how to enforce or illustrate a position which approaches so near the character of an axiom. If a planter, who had been accustomed to obtain from a certain merchant, at a given price, supplies to the amount of twelve hundred dollars per annum, were compelled, by a legal restriction, to purchase the same articles from another merchant, at an advance of thirty-three and a third per cent. we should have no difficulty in perceiving that the annual expenditure of the planter would be increased precisely four hundred dollars. Now, what is true in this respect, of one individual, must be equally so of ten millions. Assuming, for the sake of illustration, that we would annually consume articles of foreign manufacture to the amount of thirty millions of dollars, if the trade in these articles were left free, and that the proposed tariff shall have the effect of increasing the price of such articles thirty-three and a third per cent. it would follow that an annual addition of ten millions of dollars would be made to the national consumption, if the quantity consumed were neither increased nor diminished. We presume, therefore, that our first position will not be controverted by any one.

We, in the second place, lay it down, that the proposed system will not compensate the nation for this increased expense of consumption, by any increase in the aggregate quantity of *national capital*, or *labor*, or in the *productiveness* of either. If the quantity of capital can be increased, otherwise than by the gradual effects of superior profits, then must Congress have discovered the philosopher's stone, whose mode of operation, not falling under any of the laws of nature, or political economy, yet known, south of the Potomac, we must be excused from affirming or denying any thing in relation to it. No legislative enactment possesses *creative* energy. Every cent of capital, therefore, which shall be invested in manufactures, must be taken from agriculture or commerce, in the first instance. It is equally clear that the quantity of labor will not be increased by the proposed system, unless it can be made appear that the industry of man is most effectually stimulated by those pursuits which are most disagreeable, and least profitable. The reverse, however, appears to be true. We had supposed that there was no pursuit possessed of so many healthful and stimulating attractions as the cultivation of the soil; and the very claim which the manufacturers urge for protection admits it to be the most profitable mode of applying capital, or labor. But, as a complete answer to all theoretical speculations on this point, we would call your attention to the notorious fact, that, in all the agricultural sections of the United States, a large family of children is considered a poor man's fortune; while in England, whose manu-

facturing system is so often held up to our admiration, the sturdiest laborer in her manufacturing establishments, draws, from the mistaken charity of the poor laws, a part of his subsistence proportioned to the number of his children. We have no faith, therefore, in the assertion, so often made, that the extension of manufactures will furnish employment to those who would otherwise be idle. It is true, a child may be capable of performing some kinds of labor in manufactories, earlier than the labors of agriculture; but at an age so tender, he must be an unfeeling monster who could contemplate, with delight, the sacrifice of *mental* improvement at the shrine of a little paltry gain. We think it clear, therefore, that the forcing up of manufactures will not increase the quantity of labor, even throwing out of the estimate, as we have intentionally done, the superior health and vigor of the agricultural classes.

It only remains to inquire, under our second proposition, whether the proposed system will increase the *productiveness* of the national capital and labor, seeing that the *quantity* will not be increased.

The capital and labor of the nation will be distributed among the three great pursuits of national industry, *agriculture, manufactures, and commerce*. Let us consider these separately. And, first, will the products of the soil bear a higher price than they do now? One palpable effect of excluding foreign manufactures, will be, to destroy, in a great degree, the consumption, abroad, of the products of agriculture. Those nations who now take our raw materials will cease to do so when we cease to take their manufactured articles. If a diminution of the products of agriculture has a tendency to increase their price, the diminution of the demand for them has an equal tendency, at least, to decrease it. But, the sudden withdrawal of a large quantity of capital from agriculture, would certainly diminish the value of landed estates, upon the obvious principle, that, while the supply continues the same, a decrease in the demand produces a corresponding decrease in the price. Every landholder would find the value of his estate diminished in proportion to the quantity of capital diverted to manufactures. Upon the whole, therefore, it may be safely assumed, that the capital and labor employed in agriculture, would not yield a greater profit, under the proposed system, than they now do. It is equally clear that the capital of the commercial and shipping interests will not be rendered more productive. These interests will, in fact, be extremely reduced. The merchants and ship owners will be exposed to a degree of suffering and distress, infinitely greater than the manufacturers have experienced. There is no distress so painful and afflicting as that which is produced by those rash measures which do away the necessity of those old and established pursuits, in which a large proportion of the capital and labor of a nation are embarked. Yet, such would be the effect of that political quackery, which proposes to legislate a nation into wealth and prosperity. We are far within the mark when we say, that the capital and labor employed in commerce, under the proposed distribution, will not be more profitable than they now are.

We ask, then, will the capital and labor which shall be forced into the channel of manufactures, be more profitable than they would have been, if retained in the business of agriculture? Whether this question be answered in the affirmative or negative, the answer must be fatal to the pretensions of the manufacturers. If in the affirmative, it is conclusive evidence that the system of protection is extended too far; if in the negative, it is equally conclusive, that manufactures are not worthy of protection. But, to view the subject a little more closely, whatever extravagance of price manufactures may attain for a time, under the unnatural stimulus of high protecting duties, the profits of labor and capital, employed in that business, must, in the long run, be reduced, by the natural effect of competition, to the ordinary level of the profits of other employments. Looking forward, therefore, to the permanent state of things likely to result from the manufacturing system, it is apparent that capital and labor, employed in manufactures, will not be more profitable than if employed as they now are, in agriculture. Indeed, we have seen nothing to discredit the position of Adam Smith, that the pursuit of agriculture is the most profitable of any. If, laying aside theory, we consult experience, we shall find still less room to doubt it. There is no country in the world in which fortunes have been so uniformly and rapidly accumulated as in the United States; and there is no class of the community amongst which fortunes have been so rapidly and uniformly accumulated as amongst the cultivators of the soil. Consulting the market price of money loans, as the criterion of the productiveness of capital, and comparing the rates of interest in the different sections of the country, the average will be found in favor of the agricultural sections, in about the proportion of seven to five.

Thus it appears that no one of the three divisions of national capital and labor, will yield a greater profit, under the proposed system, than they now do. It requires no great skill in combination to perceive, that, as no one, separately considered, will be more profitable, so, neither will all of them, collectively considered. We have thus attempted to make out the last branch of our second proposition, that the productiveness of the national capital and labor will not be increased.

Having shewn that the annual expense of consumption will be increased by the protecting system, to the full extent of the increased price of the articles falling under its operation; and that neither the quantity nor productiveness of national capital will be increased, it follows, as a corollary, that the aggregate annual product of the capital and labor of the country will be diminished to the full extent of the annual increase of the expense of consumption. So much for the tendency of the measure under consideration to increase the national wealth!

The next objection to the proposed increase of duties, is, that it is an odious and *oppressive tax*, imposed upon all other classes of the community, for the exclusive benefit of the manufacturers. It is in vain for ingenuity to disguise the reality of this result. Under the

delusive guise of promoting the interest of the country, the great mass of our population, the consumers, will be made to pay annually to the manufacturers double the amount that they pay for the support of the federal government. This would be unjust, oppressive, and utterly inconsistent with the spirit and genius of a free government. It not only involves the principles of an *odious monopoly*, but, most distinctly, that of *favoured classes*. If the truth were presented without disguise, every sentiment of justice would rise in rebellion against it. Suppose, then, that the proposition were to raise, by direct taxes, an annual bounty of some twenty-five or thirty millions of dollars, for the encouragement of manufactures? This would be doing directly, and perhaps in the least injurious mode, as smuggling would be thereby avoided, what the advocates of the manufacturing interest wish to accomplish indirectly. Yet, we ask, would any man have the hardihood to propose the raising of such a bounty, by taxation? No, most assuredly. We reflect, with pride and pleasure, upon the character which our state has sustained in the Union. Her representatives in Congress have invariably risen above sectional views, and regarded, alone, the general interests of the nation. One of those representatives, in particular, the present Secretary of War, and, we believe, another, Mr. Lowndes, were decided advocates of the *tariff* formed soon after the war, which gave to the manufacturers a *liberal* protection. We did not disapprove of this liberal course, because, in the extent to which it was then carried, it had a national object; increasing the *defensive power of the country in time of war*. But, when we are called upon to pay a most onerous tax, with no view to national defence, for this is not pretended by its candid advocates, but merely to take some millions annually from the pockets of the agriculturists and merchants, to give, as a bounty, to the manufacturers, we disdain the idea of being the dupes of such a policy. In fact, the only legitimate object of protecting manufactures, by duties on importation, is, not to increase the national wealth, but to provide for its defence, at the expense of its wealth.

We believe it is generally conceded, that the proposed measure will render necessary a resort to direct taxation. This is a strong objection to it. If we had the consolation to reflect that the *impost* laid on us, for the benefit of the manufacturer, would go into the national treasury, we should have no great ground of complaint, peculiar to the agricultural interest. But, when we are told that the mode of raising tax by impost is "a rotten system," and that the sooner we get rid of it the better, we must be excused for saying there is more of paradoxical quaintness, than of statesman-like wisdom, in the assertion. It is, no doubt, true, that, as a nation grows old, the distribution of its capital will change of itself; and the quantity of imported articles will be so diminished that an adequate revenue cannot be raised by impost duties. But does it follow that, because such an event must take place, in the natural course of things, we ought, therefore, to hasten its approach by an unnatural stimulus? As well might it be argued that we ought to hasten the approach of old age, by the

action of exhausting stimulants, because old age will certainly come, if death do not intervene.

The advocates of the manufacturing system appeal to the wealth and power of Great Britain, as a conclusive argument in favor of their favorite policy. Now, we protest against this mode of reasoning, as unphilosophical and delusive. It would equally prove many other positions, to which no American would assent. Let us throw the argument into logical form, and we shall more distinctly perceive the consequences to which it will lead. Great Britain sustains her manufactures by protecting duties and bounties; she is wealthy and powerful; therefore, all nations that wish to be wealthy and powerful, ought to force up manufactures by protecting duties and bounties. This is a fair and candid statement of the argument, as used. For, no attempt has been made to trace any peculiar connection between the wealth and power of Great Britain, and her manufacturing system, other than appears from the naked facts, that she does protect manufactures by duties and monopolies, and is wealthy and powerful. Now, to give the same argument a different application, Great Britain has a hereditary monarch, a corrupt parliament, rotten boroughs, and a body of hereditary nobility; she is wealthy and powerful; therefore, all nations that wish to be wealthy and powerful, ought to have a hereditary monarch, a corrupt parliament, rotten boroughs, and a body of hereditary nobility. Nay, further: the inhabitants of Great Britain are fond of *roast beef*, and commit *suicide*; Great Britain is wealthy and powerful; therefore, the people of all nations that wish to be wealthy and powerful, ought to be fond of *roast beef*, and to commit *suicide*. Such are the absurdities to which we are led by a course of reasoning, which places, in the relation of cause and effect, circumstances which are accidentally associated. The fact is, the situation of Great Britain is the very reverse of that of the United States, in all the particulars which constitute an aptitude for domestic manufactures. Great Britain is a small island, filled up with inhabitants. She must either keep up her manufacturing system, by legal regulations, or her citizens will seek their fortunes in more favored climes. This, we venture to assert, is the foundation of British policy in relation to manufactures. It is a policy founded in national pride. The proudest and dearest associations of Englishmen are connected with the island. It is the theatre of their victories over despotism, the tomb of their kings, their heroes, and their fathers. Under the influence of sentiments, which we do not disapprove, the statesmen of that country resolved that "old England" should be the seat of a mighty power, and that a system should be devised which would furnish employment for the increasing and crowded mass of population. It is by this system that they have moored to their shores the greatest naval power in the world. The effect of such a system in the United States would be the very reverse of all this. Her navy would be destroyed; for no man is so wild as to suppose we could manufacture articles for exportation, to any considerable extent. There would be no nursery for seamen.

In examining the motives of England for promoting domestic manufactures, we have fallen, we think, upon one powerful motive which operates in the eastern states in favor of the same policy. It is natural for *old states*, which have once been the seat of power, to repine at the departure of their strength. As much so, as for an old maid to weep over the withered flowers of her youth, and the departed days of her ascendancy. The old states, therefore, behold with chagrin and mortification, the tide of their population flowing to the south and west, to fertilize the wilderness! Though this feeling may be natural, it is neither national nor just, in the policy which it dictates. Is it national to endeavor to prevent the diffusion of our population, which will do away sectional distinctions? Is it just that the whole nation should pay a bounty to the old states to enable them to retain their citizens at home? Is it just that the citizens of the new states should contribute their full share of this bounty, to check the progress of emigration and the rise in the value of their lands, which would be the necessary result? The justice of such a policy is so sublimated as to rise above the atmosphere of our humble comprehension. But it is said that we ought to protect *home* manufactures in opposition to *foreign*; and some have been so uncandid or dull, as to inculcate the idea that all the industry which shall be thrown into the channel of manufactures will be so much clear gain to the labor and wealth of the nation. Now this is ridiculous jargon, if there is any truth in the views already presented. If we have ten millions of inhabitants, rearing the products of agriculture at an annual profit of fifteen per cent. to exchange for the manufactured articles of Great Britain, fabricated at a profit of five per cent. we should be happy to know if Great Britain does not support as much of our industry as we do of hers, and that too of a much more profitable kind? And while our citizens continue to prosper, in a degree quite beyond a parallel in history, is it not strange that we should complain of the commercial connection upon which that prosperity principally depends? The question, therefore, is not, whether we will prefer *home* to *foreign* industry, but whether we will prefer, by unjust restrictions, a home industry that is *less profitable*, to one that is *more so*! We hope, therefore, that no further efforts will be made to make the sacred associations of "home" auxiliary to a policy calculated to diminish the happiness of that home.

That large manufacturing establishments, by throwing dependent multitudes under the control of large capitalists, would impair the purity of elections, cannot be questioned. Neither can it be denied that manufacturing labor is unfavorable to that strength and elasticity of body, upon which the defence of the country depends. It is no answer to these objections to say, that Providence would not be so unjust as to make those pursuits which nations must follow, sooner or later, incompatible with freedom; for, it will be generally found that when Providence rears up the pursuit, He also provides the remedy for its attendant evils. It is only when the miserable quackery of man anticipates Providence, and forces up premature existences, that

the evil is felt in its full force, unmitigated and uncompensated by any accompanying circumstance.

We will close this remonstrance with one more view of this important subject, showing the extreme caution and deliberation with which Congress ought to act. A false step taken in this system of *protections can never be retraced*. This will appear from an obvious application of an established maxim of political economy. However high you may raise the duties upon foreign articles, the effect of competition will be to reduce the profits of the manufacturer to the level of the profits of other kinds of industry. When a large manufacturing interest, therefore, shall have grown up under the faith of high protection, and can but barely sustain itself with the aid of the protection, it would be absolute ruin of that great interest to withdraw a protecting duty of some fifty per cent. and suddenly reduce, in a corresponding degree, the value of the whole mass of invested manufacturing capital. The government that would hazard such a measure ought to have a military force to suppress insurrection. We sincerely hope, therefore, that your honorable body will yield to the united calls of justice and sound policy, and abstain from a course of measures not consistent with either.